



GASTINEAU & GOLD

by

J. Douglas Williams



I always enjoy reading the Alaska Token Collector & Polar Numismatist. I thought the following information would be of interest to readers in regard to your lead story on The Thane Slug in the August/September issue. The article raised the question as to whether the Alaska Gold Mines Co. slug was an engraver's error or a fabrication, as the name Alaska Gold



Mines Co. is not commonly known.

The answer is found in Hard Rock Gold - The Story of the Great Mines that were the Heartbeat of Juneau by David and Brenda Stone which was published in 1987. At page 39 the authors point out that "Alaska Gold Mines Company was formed to acquire a controlling interest in the Alaska Gastineau Mining Company. (Alaska Gold Mines was the name of the holding Company; Alaska Gastineau the name of the mining company.) The sum of \$4,500,000 was raised to develop the consolidated property." The Stones go on to note at page 42 that:

Daniel C. Jackling was named vice president of Alaska Gold Mines and was instrumental in designing the Gastineau's 6000-ton mill. ...

.... It would be the first time that the principles of wholesale mining and milling had been applied to process gold-bearing ore. There would be no pre-sorting of waste rock from ore — the mill would crush everything.. And, there would be no stamp mills.

There would be four stages to the milling process: coarse crushing, fine crushing, concentration, and retreatment of the ore. [As described later by the Stones, "[a]t the retreatment plant, the concentrates were elevated to the top floor. In the first step they were run over Wilfrey tables to remove the rough lead concentrate which carried the free coarse gold. The lead concentrate was then retabled to remove the 'free gold' — the gold that could be recovered without chemical treatment. The free gold was heated in an open hearth furnace and formed into gold bricks."] The traditional processes of amalgamation and cyanidation as used at Treadwell would be discarded — the Gastineau would have no refining capability. Basically, the mill would be a concentrator, producing concentrates

at a ratio of one ton of concentrates for each 50 to 60 tons of ore. These would be shipped to a smelter in California (Selby Smelting Company) to recover the gold. [A picture of the mill from page 49 appears to coincide with the engraver's rendition on the Thane slug. The cold process presumably accounts for the fact that the Thane Slug is only about 58 percent gold.] ...



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EDITORIAL

Our thanks to Doug Williams of Anchorage for the information about the Thane Slug. This appears to prove conclusively the connection between Alaska Gastineau Mines Co. and Alaska Gold Mines Company. Despite my initial suspicion, no one (except the owner), could be happier than I that we can accept this as a legitimate item.

The dialogue that has occurred since our initial article on the Thane Slug is an outstanding example of collectors exchanging information. When we started this newsletter 22 years ago, it was not meant to be a money maker (and we were right!). Its purpose was to exchange information and spread knowledge concerning polar numismatics. We think we have done this!

This past summer, when Candy Waugaman asked for copies of this newsletter for the last year, your editor was suspicious. It took a few months to learn the reason behind her madness. Your editor has been presented a "Special Recognition Award" by the Alaska Historical Society for this newsletter. Our thanks go to the Society, and to Candy Waugaman.

As the year draws to an end, it is time to thank all that have contributed information to the newsletter this year. In order of their appearance, our thanks go to:

Brian E. Cleary	Dave Gyles
Kurtis Hawk	Bob Lyall
Jim Robb	Alan Weinberg
Jon Helgi	Jerry Remick
Audun Davidsen	Jerry Cleworth
Richard Reisinger	Gary Kruesel
Roy Brown	J. Douglas Williams
Ron Benice	

The list above seems shorter than in years past, so I apologize if I have missed anyone.

Also, as the year draws to a close, if your mailing label ends in **00/10** (indicating 2000/issue #10), it is time to renew. Please use the enclosed subscription form to renew your subscription. Other subscribers whose subscription does not expire with this issue will also receive a subscription form, prorated so that their subscription will end with the 01/10 issue. You may renew now, or we will send another notice when your subscription is about to expire.

If you choose to not renew your subscription we would appreciate knowing why. If it is through some deficiency of ours, your comments could assist us in putting out a better product. Our thanks to you for your support in years past. Perhaps we will be able to serve you at a later time.

Best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a prosperous new year. We will also take this opportunity to wish you a "Merry Millennium" which will begin on January 1, 2001!

You know, I just feel like I am forgetting something, but it is time to print and mail this issue!

PRICE REALIZED



The Townsend & Rose, 25 cents in cigars encased Indian cent from Dawson recently sold on eBay for \$616.

Alan Weinberg suggested a census of the dates on the encased cents from Yukon. If you would care to report these to us, we will act as the gathering point, and report on the results in a later issue.

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GASTINEAU & GOLD, cont.

Ground was broken on the millsite October 31, 1913. The land had been cleared previously and tramways erected for handling construction supplies. The first of four sections of the mill was completed February 12, 1915, and operations began. A delay of 42 days over the scheduled completion date was due to the loss of electrical equipment being freighted on a ship which sank enroute. [Since the Thane Slug is “Alaska Gold Mines Co. Gold from First Mill Run March 1st, 1915, Thane Alaska”, it can be inferred that the actual operation started a little later than indicated by the Stones.]

By November of 1915, all four sections of the mill were in operation and treating 6000 tons of ore daily. The entire mining industry watched the Gastineau in amazement. The value of stock increased tremendously — from \$10 a share when the original stock in Alaska Gold Mines Company was issued in 1912, to \$24 a share while still in the construction stage in 1914, to \$40.75 a share in 1915.

The entire account by the Stones in Hard Rock Gold is very interesting. The book includes detailed diagrams of the milling process and a number of pictures. The Stones tell of Bartlett L. Thane being the general manager of the Alaska Gastineau Mining Company who completed its organization after blocking an earlier attempt by another manager based on a grudge over a poker game. The low grade of the ore being processed plus the loss of workers when the United States entered World War I in 1917, led to the eventual closing of the mill in 1921, with the Alaska Gastineau Mining Company ceasing mining operations by June 2nd. Bart Thane died in 1927 after spending seven years trying to create interest in construction of a pulp mill on the property. The pulp mill never materialized and in 1934 Alaska Gold Mines Company sold the property to Alaska Juneau Gold Mining Company. I lived in my grandfather's house in Juneau from the late 40's to the 1950's. My friends and I enjoyed exploring the old mine properties in Juneau and Thane, ringing the bells on the old engines, etc. Back then there was still an antique auto in one of the sheds up on the hillside above Thane. It was in excellent condition and had never been removed since there was no road access to the shed.

Although collectors today will undoubtedly not be lucky enough to add a Thane Slug to their collections, there are Alaska Gastineau Mining Company tokens that are within the reach of most collectors, such as the 12 1/2 cents brass token from A.G.M. Co. Club Room, Benice Thane Number 1. A more difficult Alaska Gastineau Mining Co. token is the Good for 1 Loaf of Bread token, Benice Thane Number 2.A. There are also a number of Alaska Gastineau Mining Company tool checks (Benice C2, A,B,C and D) that are relatively easy to obtain.

